

# Return to Use Initiative

## 2007 Demonstration Project

### Rockwell International Corp.:

Allegan, Michigan

**THE SITE:** The 30-acre Rockwell International Corp. site is located in Allegan, Michigan. From the 1920s until 1991, Rockwell manufactured universal joints and drive-line equipment for heavy trucks and construction equipment. During manufacturing operations, wastewater containing process wastes and waste oils was discharged into the Kalamazoo River, a wetland area behind the plant, and a series of lagoons. Prior to 1970, the wetland area and the lagoons were filled in and built over. During the 1970s, Rockwell installed a wastewater treatment system at the site and discharged the treated wastes through a series of three new lagoons and into the Kalamazoo River under a National Pollutant Elimination Discharge System permit. Meanwhile, the City of Allegan operated an 11-acre municipal landfill adjacent to the site from 1947 to 1972. In 1965, Rockwell purchased four acres of the landfill for use as a parking lot. Portions of the landfill may overlap with areas of Rockwell waste disposal. As a result of disposal practices, surface and subsurface soils, ground water, and sediments in the lagoons and the Kalamazoo River were contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-VOCs, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and metals. EPA added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1987. A Record of Decision was issued in 2002 and removal action activities, which included the excavation and removal of contaminated sediments and soils, are complete. The remaining remedial work at the site includes installing additional monitoring wells to assess ground water and determine if a slurry wall or other remedial measures are needed to address any remaining site contaminants in the ground water.

**THE OPPORTUNITY:** EPA selected the Rockwell International Corp. site as a 2001 Superfund Redevelopment Initiative pilot, and awarded the City of Allegan a \$100,000 grant, which the city used to evaluate its zoning and create a reuse plan for the site. The site reuse plan that the city created calls for mixed use of the site. The site property has an excellent location, centrally situated on the Kalamazoo River, with flat terrain and striking views that could attract current and future residents. The site property has existing utilities infrastructure, is located close to the city's fairgrounds, and is within walking distance of the city's downtown district. As long as future site users take ground water use restrictions and appropriate management of site soils at depths greater than two feet into account, the site's remedy supports unrestricted land uses. Developers and the City of Allegan have expressed interest in potential future land use opportunities at the site.

**THE BARRIERS:** The property is currently zoned for industrial use, but industrial reuse of the site would not be compatible with the surrounding land uses. The City of Allegan would like to modify the zoning to allow for



#### **Barriers:**

Zoning limitations and lack of institutional controls to ensure long-term protectiveness

#### **Solution:**

Implementation of appropriate and effective institutional controls



#### **Before:**

Former industrial site near a revitalized downtown area

#### **After:**

Potential mixed-use property addressing needs of the Allegan community

residential, commercial, municipal, educational, or recreational use. Institutional controls for the site are currently not in place. The site's remedy requires deed restrictions to be placed on the site to ensure protectiveness of the remedy. Institutional controls are needed to restrict ground water use and access to soils cleaned to industrial levels present at depths greater than two feet. The top two feet of soils have been cleaned to meet residential standards.

**THE SOLUTION:** EPA will continue working to ensure protectiveness of the remedy. In order to do so, EPA will work with the City of Allegan and other site property owners to implement appropriate institutional controls, including deed restrictions and ground water use restrictions. If a slurry wall is required at the site, EPA could work with MDEQ and the site's responsible party to determine whether it may be possible to locate low-impact land uses like recreational trails within the slurry wall's buffer area. The City of Allegan could consider rezoning different parts of the site for different uses using existing zoning districts to address the limitations currently posed by the site's industrial zoning. EPA will continue to coordinate with the local community and the City of Allegan and provide assistance as redevelopment plans progress.

**THE SITE NOW:** The Rockwell site is currently divided into an industrial section owned by the Allegan Metal Finishing Company and a section owned by the City of Allegan. The remedy construction is nearly complete and the City is ready to work with the local community to identify appropriate ways to reuse the site.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Leah Evison, Remedial Project Manager, at (312) 886-2064 or [evison.leah@epa.gov](mailto:evison.leah@epa.gov); or Tom Bloom, Region 5 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (312) 886-1967 or [bloom.thomas@epa.gov](mailto:bloom.thomas@epa.gov).



The Kalamazoo River. The Rockwell International Corp. site is the exposed soil area in the background area of the photograph.